



# On Compromise

*John Morley*

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## **On Compromise** John Morley

"His most considerable contribution to current thought....In this essay the writer laments that the crumbling away of dogma, incident to the use of the historic method in all departments of research, has enervated men to relax their hold upon positive and categorical beliefs. We are so persuaded of the relativity of all ascertained truth in politics, morals, and religion, that our minds are hospitable to opinions which no logic can reconcile, and which immediately conflict when put into practice. But we are in no danger, he thinks, of putting our opinions to so hazardous a test as that of practice. Practical life is governed by the sliding-scale of expediency; we hold, says he, to 'the paramount wisdom of counting the narrow, immediate, and personal expediency for everything, and the whole general, ultimate, and completed expediency for nothing.' This general, ultimate, and completed expediency is Mr. Morley's definition of morality; and this sentence is only a condensation of that proposition, which is very fully developed, that the huckstering spirit of political life has permeated every department of life and thought in England. Has so clear-cut and forthright an essay ever been written upon a subject admitting and inviting so much casuistry?" -The Dial

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER II. OF THE POSSIBLE UTILITY OF ERROR

CHAPTER III. INTELLECTUAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE POLITICAL SPIRIT

CHAPTER IV. RELIGIOUS CONFORMITY

CHAPTER V. THE REALIZATION OF OPINION

Conclusion

Note: The Doctrine of Liberty

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